

0600 '99 JUL 19 P301

PO Box 910
Wilton, Maine 04294
15 July 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Re: Docket #98-N-1038, Irradiation in the production, processing, and handling of food.

As a consumer of food, as a small producer of food, and as a former Maine State Representative who has served on the Maine Legislature's Agriculture Committee and dealt with bills regarding irradiated food I wish to express my concerns about any changes in labelling of irradiated food. In particular I strongly oppose elimination of straightforward labels stating that the product has been irradiated or treated with irradiation.

It should not matter what reason anyone would have for wanting irradiated food to be labelled. Whether one consumer wishes to seek out irradiated food for safety purposes, or another needs to compensate for loss of vitamins and nutritional value in such food, both need labels in order to make informed choices. Informed choice is the basis of a free market.

I oppose weasel-worded labeling such as "cold pasteurization" and its ilk. These words are intended to deceive, not inform. The only changes I might suggest would be to make the notice more prominent so that consumers can more easily tell what they are buying.

One of the arguments made in the Legislature in favor of a ban on the sale of irradiated food in Maine was the concern that the federal government would not continue to require clear labelling of these products. I don't think it helps the credibility of the food industry to eliminate labelling requirements for irradiated food, or to substitute euphemisms for plain labelling.

Sincerely,



Conrad Heeschen

cc: Maine congressional delegation

98N 1038

C4230

C Heeschen
PO Box 910
Wilton, Maine 04294



Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)
Food & Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

20857+0001

